

Warm-Up Passages

The warm-ups are for teacher use only, and are written as stories. On the first day, read the entire passage all the way through. Then do revisions of each portion one day at a time as a daily warm-up at the beginning of class. Use the language of the Revising and Editing Question Stems and Responses to correct the warm-ups together in class.

Passage 1 (Days 1–4)

The Mystery of the Cinnamon Rolls

“Why is Lucy all sticky? She has sticky stuff on her paws and ears,” questions Celia.

“I’m sure it’s something from outside,” replies Sofia.

“Hey! Look!” shouts Roberto, holding an empty cinnamon roll carton.

“What happened to my cinnamon rolls? I’d only eaten one so far,” says Sofia.

Celia ponders the clues for a moment. Then she reaches over and sniffs Lucy’s ears.

Lucy smells like cinnamon. “I think I know what happened to your cinnamon rolls,” Celia grins.

Passage 2 (Days 5–9)

Making Tamales

“Yummy! Tamales are delicious,” says Roberto.

“I’m going to make some tamales on Thanksgiving. Do you want to come help me?” asks Celia’s mom.

“I’d love to. Ooh! I’m going to make some tamales!” smiles Roberto.

“You don’t know what you’re getting yourself into. When my uncle helped once and only once, he learned it was too much work. He prefers to buy them rather than make them,” advises Celia.

The next day Roberto is anxious to get started. As Celia’s mom prepares the meat, Celia, Roberto, and Sofia begin spreading the masa (dough) on the corn husks. After a couple dozen, Roberto gets restless.

“This really is hard work,” complains Roberto. He doesn’t realize he has masa everywhere, including in his hair. Minutes later, Roberto asks, “Are we finished yet?”

Finally, Celia’s mom announces, “Tamales are ready!” Roberto rushes over to devour his hard work. As he takes a bite, Roberto whispers to Celia, “Next time your mom wants me to help make tamales, tell her I’m busy.”

Warm-Up Passages (continued)

Passage 3 (Days 10–20)

Allison

Allison changed my life. No, she wasn't my girlfriend. In June 2001, Tropical Storm Allison hit.

My mom had gone to a concert in San Antonio with her sisters. I stayed home to take care of my little sister. We were sitting on the couch watching TV that night when it started raining.

I rolled my eyes, thinking, "Great, now the yard is going to be muddy, and my baby sister won't be able to play outside tomorrow. I guess I'll have to think of something else to do." It kept raining.

And it kept raining. I noticed the water started seeping under the door. I put down some towels to soak it up, but it kept raining.

By midnight, water was creeping into the house. I couldn't sleep, and I didn't know what to do. Around five in the morning, the water inside the house was up to my knees. And it kept raining.

I tried to call for help, but not one of the phone lines worked. By late morning, the water was up to my waist, and it kept rising.

I grabbed my four-year-old sister and swam out of the house to a nearby office building. I climbed into the attic hoping we would be safe. It kept raining.

It finally stopped. I looked at us. We were a mess. The filthy flood waters had saturated our clothes and hair. We didn't smell good, either.

Hours later as I sat thinking about what to do next, I heard a familiar voice shouting my name. I peered outside.

It was my cousin with a stranger in a boat. They'd come to rescue us. I waved and yelled to her from the window.

I carried my little sister out, and the man with my cousin helped us into the boat. As we moved farther and farther away, one tear rolled down my cheek.